

OUTLET CREEK BRIDGE
Sullivan Lake Ranger District Administrative Site
Colville National Forest
Metaline Falls Vicinity
Pend Oreille County
Washington

HAER No. WA-117

HAER
WASH
26-METFAV
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

OUTLET CREEK BRIDGE SULLIVAN LAKE RANGER DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE SITE COLVILLE NATIONAL FOREST, METALINE FALLS VICINITY PEND OREILLE COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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Location: Spans Outlet Creek at the north end of Sullivan Lake ca. 5 miles southeast of Metaline Falls.
U.S.G.S 7.5 Minute Series, Metaline Falls Quadrangle, Pend Oreille County, Washington.
Universal Transverse Mercator coordinates:
11.478880.5409400

Date of Construction: 1935

Engineer: U.S. Forest Service, Region 1, Missoula

Builder: Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), U.S. Forest Service, and Pend Oreille County

Present Owner: U.S. Forest Service, Colville National Forest

Present Use: Vehicular bridge; to be removed

Significance: The Outlet Creek Bridge is the longest of three CCC-constructed bridges remaining on the Colville National Forest. Built by CCC enrollees at the nearby Camp Sullivan Lake, with assistance from Forest Service and Pend Oreille County employees, the bridge retains its original appearance despite replacement of some materials in 1982. The Outlet Creek Bridge was determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places in 1993.

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Introduction

The Outlet Creek Bridge spans Outlet Creek at the north end of Sullivan Lake, a picturesque body of water in northeastern Washington. Glaciation sculpted the steep mountainsides that rise from the banks of the lake, whose level is maintained by a dam a few feet downstream from the bridge on Outlet Creek. Lands around the lake are included within the Colville National Forest and managed by the U.S. Forest Service, which also owns and maintains the Outlet Creek Bridge. Built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the Forest Service, and Pend Oreille County in 1935, the structure connects the Sullivan Lake Ranger Station, a complex of buildings also erected by the CCC, with Pend Oreille County Road 9345 and the small town of Metaline Falls about five miles northwest of the lake.

Deterioration over the past six decades has resulted in serious structural problems for the bridge. At present it is estimated that as much as seventy-five percent of the substructure suffers from advanced decay in its wooden components. While its present condition is estimated safe for carrying limited loads, the bridge's load-bearing capacity is substandard for current traffic safety requirements. The Forest Service plans to remove the present structure and replace it with a modern concrete bridge in the summer of 1994.

Description

The Outlet Creek Bridge is the longest of three CCC-constructed bridges remaining on the Colville National Forest. It also appears to be one of the longest, if not the longest, CCC-built timber bridges still standing in the Pacific Northwest. The bridge is a 190-foot long timber trestle structure consisting of ten 19-foot spans with a nail-laminated deck 12 feet in width. Ten bents of 5 piles each plus one bent of 3 piles, cross-braced with bolted 3 by 10 inch, 20 to 24-foot-long timbers, support the deck, which consists of 2 by 6 inch laminated fir planks. Deck curbing consists of 8 by 8 inch timbers sitting atop 4 by 8 inch blocks attached at the base of each deck rail post. The deck rests atop timber stringers measuring 6 by 16 inches and 20 feet in length. The stringers sit atop timber caps of 12 by 12 inch, 16-foot-long dimension.

The caps and piles were replaced in 1981, as was the railing (in 1984) which originally consisted of 3 by 8 inch rails bolted to 8 by 8 inch posts. All original timber material, except for the railing, was Douglas fir pressure treated with creosote oil "by the empty cell process." (Drawing No. R-63-2, October 1934, U.S. Forest Service Region 1 Office, Missoula, now housed in the Region 6 Office, Portland, Oregon). In 1982 steel "running plates" (probably installed in the 1960s) were replaced with "running planks," that is, timbers laid parallel and longitudinally, spaced to absorb vehicle tire wear on the deck for the length of the structure. (Julie Jackson, CNF engineer, interview with Craig Holstine, 1993).

**OUTLET CREEK BRIDGE, SULLIVAN LAKE
RANGER DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE SITE
HABS No. WA-117** (Page 3)

The superstructure's (stringers and deck) current load capacity has been determined to be:

- 22 tons for Type 3 trucks (3 axles)
- 35 tons for Type 3S2 trucks (5 axles)
- 41 tons for Type 3-3 trucks (6 axles).

The timber stringers are adequate to support the above limited loads for approximately 15 years. Complete replacement of 6 pile bents, 7 additional individual piles, 8 pile caps, 80 percent of the cross-bracing, and the entire timber deck would be required to maintain the bridge in service, however. (Report of Current Structural Condition for Sullivan Lake Outlet Bridge, Colville National Forest, October 1993).

Historical Narrative

Situated in northern Pend Oreille County, Washington, the Outlet Creek Bridge was built by CCC enrollees from Camp Sullivan Lake, with the aid of county workers and U.S. Forest Service personnel, in 1935. What is today the Sullivan Lake Ranger District on the Colville National Forest (CNF) was, at that time, a ranger district on the Kaniksu National Forest (KNF). Boundaries of the two Forests were adjusted in 1954, bringing the District and the bridge within the CNF.

Sullivan Lake, the namesake and focal point of the Ranger District, has been popular among local vacationers at least since its level was raised forty feet by a dam constructed across its outlet (i.e., Outlet Creek) by Lehigh Power Company in 1910. A few feet upstream from the dam, the road accessing the Sullivan Lake Ranger Station crosses Outlet Creek on the bridge which is the subject of this report.

The CCC at Camp Sullivan Lake, 1933-1941

On 4 May 1933, KNF Supervisor J.E. Ryan inspected a site on the north end of Sullivan Lake that was to become the first CCC camp erected in Ninth CCC District, known as the Fort George Wright District for the U.S. Army post that served as its headquarters on the outskirts of Spokane over one hundred miles to the south. Thirty young CCC enrollees, dressed in regulation blue denim uniforms, hailing from northeast Washington, arrived in Metalline Falls on 16 May 1933. As the first contingent of CCC Company 938, they were transported to the lake in squads of eight. The enrollees first cleared the 5.6 acre camp site where barracks for 250 men were to be constructed. Lumber contracts were awarded within a week of their arrival, with the first contract going to Russell and Pugh of Springston, Idaho. When the temporary camp was completed, enrollees cleared and graded an airfield north of the lake. Measuring 2,300 feet long and 400 feet wide, the airstrip was built large enough for commercial use. For safety reasons, and apparently in anticipation of further development of the site, CCC men

**OUTLET CREEK BRIDGE, SULLIVAN LAKE
RANGER DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE SITE
HABS No. WA-117**

(Page 4)

cleared forest cover one mile off the north end of the landing field. Spokane pilot Nick Mamer landed the first plane on the field in early October 1933, and flew on to Hughes Meadows a mile east of the Washington-Idaho border where CCC enrollees completed an airstrip begun two years earlier by the USFS. (*Metalline Falls News* (MFN) 4 and 18 May, and 5 October 1933; and Box 26, RG 95, Federal Archives and Records Center (FARC), Seattle).

The men of Company 938 remained at Camp Sullivan Lake until 26 October 1933, when they were sent to Camp Lewis in western Washington for the winter. While CCC boys were not always welcomed or accepted in some communities, the young men of Company 938 were warmly received by local citizens. (Charles Gilliland interview with Darcy Fellin, 1994). When the approximately 100 enrollees departed by train from Metalline Falls, the newspaper bid them a fond farewell:

The men and officers of 938 Company have as a whole proven a gentlemanly lot and conduct at the camp and around town has drawn very little, if any, criticism from local people, many of whom have done much to make the stay of the younger men in this vicinity pleasant. Our citizens will miss the boys and officers and regret they could not remain here through the winter. We hope to see this company return here next season if the CCC is continued. (MFN 26 October 1933).

But enrollees with Company 938 did not return to Camp F-1 the following spring. In April 1934, Company 1745 arrived to occupy the camp vacated the previous autumn. Although from Washington State, the men of Company 1745 had begun their CCC careers at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. Within a month of their arrival, sixty-seven new members joined the group, which changed its official designation to Company 2920. By 2 May 1935, enrollment in the Company reached 228, all from the state of Washington. That homogeneity was apparently maintained throughout the Company's long tenure at Camp Sullivan; the organization gained the unofficial title of "Washington's Own CCC." With an unusually large number of LEM (local experienced men, i.e., veterans of several tours with the CCC), the Company was an effective work force that left a lasting legacy of accomplishments on the national forest. (Because the Company came to include so many LEM, all but sixteen of the LEM were eventually transferred to other camps in need of their skills. As experienced men were replaced, Camp Sullivan Lake essentially became a training site for new enrollees). (MFN 18 April, 2 May, and 6 June 1935; and History of Company 2920, Sullivan Lake Ranger Station).

Enrollees were rotated frequently from Camp F-1 at Sullivan Lake to numerous work stations around the Ranger District. Crews were sent out to build roads, trails, and bridges, fight forest fires, plant trees and improve existing stands, install telephone lines, and construct lookouts, among other duties. CCC men from the main camp laid cribbing along the Sullivan Lake shoreline and constructed campgrounds at both ends of the lake. Forest conservation included fire fighting which, of course, was unpredictable. According to most alumni of the organization who fought fires, it was a frightening experience. The sound of a powerful fire driven by high

**OUTLET CREEK BRIDGE, SULLIVAN LAKE
RANGER DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE SITE
HABS No. WA-117**

(Page 5)

winds through tree tops created a horrible roar. Samuel Ferraro, a Camp Sullivan Lake veteran, recalled that a member of his CCC company was killed fighting forest fires in Washington, and that Camp Anderson was named in the young man's honor. (Ferraro interview with Darcy Fellin, 1994). Robert MacDonald said that, while with Company 2920, he fought fires as far as three miles across the Canadian border, which was the legal limit for CCC work in Canada. (MacDonald interview with Darcy Fellin, 1994).

Controlling blister rust, a disease caused by a fungus infecting white pines, consumed considerable efforts of the CCC boys in northeast Washington. Blister rust constituted such a widespread problem in eastern Washington, northern Idaho, and western Montana that the United States Bureau of Entomology and the Forest Service assigned 1,031 men to work on that problem alone during the summer of 1935. Both the CCC enrollees and men hired from county relief rolls by the Bureau of Entomology worked on blister rust control, the latter group being housed in camps established specifically for that task. A CCC camp (F-101) was located at Gypsy Meadows northeast of Sullivan Lake primarily for blister rust control. Men used "hoedags," a small pick-like tool with a light handle, for uprooting gooseberries, currants, and other plants that hosted the fungus that spread to the valuable white pines. The work was among the most rigorous tasks assigned to CCC men, who wore caulked-sole boots to maintain their footing on the steep, brush-covered, often wet forested hillsides. "Our caulked boots made mountain cats of us," recalled former enrollee George Ehrgott. By the fall of 1934 their efforts had resulted in an estimated 196,394 acres of timber saved from blister rust infection on the Kaniksu National Forest. (MFN 25 October 1934, 11 April, 27 June and 15 August 1935; and George Ehrgott, "Blister Rust in the CCC," unpubd. ms., 1990).

In addition to the main facility at Sullivan Lake, Company 2920 operated so-called "spike" camps located near project work stations at distant locations. Men at the camps usually lived in tents, due to the mobile, extremely temporary nature of the jobs at hand. In early August 1933 seventy-five enrollees established a temporary tent camp at Hughes Meadows twenty-nine miles from Sullivan Lake, while another contingent of CCC men were stationed at a spike camp on Harvey Creek twenty-two miles away. Both work crews built roads into previously inaccessible areas for both timber harvest and forest fire fighting purposes. Assignment to a spike camp was usually not considered desirable duty; an Emergency Conservation Works (ECW, the original agency from which the CCC emerged) inspection of the Sullivan Lake Ranger District spike camps reported in July 1934 that the food served in the facilities was poor both in quality and quantity. (Box 21, RG 95, FARC; and MFN 10 August 1933).

Road-building, the chief preoccupation of spike camp occupants, assumed primary importance on the KNF, for without access into the far corners of the Forest, other projects were not feasible and fire-fighting nearly impossible. Major projects included the road over the divide to Nordman, Idaho (1934); Pass, Sand, and Slate creeks roads (1935); Stagger Inn Road (1937); Harvey Creek Road; Dry Canyon, Snyder Peak and Salmo Mountain Roads (1937); and many others. CCC crews cleared and graded the twenty-foot-wide Metalline Falls to Sullivan Lake

OUTLET CREEK BRIDGE, SULLIVAN LAKE
RANGER DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE SITE
HABS No. WA-117 (Page 6)

Road in 1934 ahead of a Pend Oreille County crew that laid a smooth gravel surface atop the roadbed. Completion of that road, and a bridge across Sullivan Creek, were crucial steps leading to construction of the Outlet Creek Bridge and conversion of the Sullivan Lake CCC facility from a summer to a year around, or "permanent," camp. (MFN 20 and 27 September 1934, 28 November 1935; Master Plan of Work, Camp F-1, May 1936-April 1941, Sullivan Lake Ranger Station files; and John Green interview with John Ogmundson, 1990).

Construction of the Outlet Creek Bridge immediately preceded the decision made at Fort Wright to demolish the temporary buildings and erect permanent structures at Camp Sullivan Lake (MFN 6 June 1935). The lone exception to be retained of the camp buildings was the new mess hall, completed in May 1935. (The local press reported a "big house-warming and dance" was to be held in the hall, with guests invited from neighboring communities). (MFN 2 May 1935).

Buildings constructed that summer included eight barracks, an infirmary, bathhouse, washhouse, drying room, an administration building, a recreation hall with offices, a supply room, company store, generator building, garage, and numerous smaller structures. Material salvaged from the temporary buildings was used in construction of the new facilities, which was done "by contract, with employment going only to union labor. Local carpenters going on the job must have union cards or permits from the nearest carpenters' union," reported the *Metalline Falls News* (6 June 1935).

CCC enrollees also built numerous Forest Service administrative buildings at Sullivan Lake including the Ranger Station Office, vehicle garage, equipment shed, and a fire warehouse. The campground at the northern end of the lake was also a CCC project. Enrollees erected the toilet and changing house there in the 1930s. The CCC occupied Camp F-1 Sullivan Lake until Company 5703 abandoned the facility on 28 November 1941. In November 1942 the US Army transferred the twenty-three remaining camp buildings to the Forest Service. (Throop 1979, pp. 222-223; Strelnik 1987).

Many of the structures built by the CCC for use by the Forest Service remain at what is today the Sullivan Lake Ranger Station. Preservation of CCC camp buildings, on the other hand, has been the exception rather than the rule there as well as nationwide. After the CCC was officially ended on 30 June 1942, the agency's property was to be disposed of by 1 July the following year. In January 1943 the Army Air Corps attempted to requisition the Camp Sullivan Lake buildings to serve as hospital and recreation facilities for convalescing wounded veterans returning from World War II. The Forest Service objected, eventually agreeing to allow the military access to the buildings as need arose in return for being allowed to retain the buildings for future use by the USFS. In 1947 four barracks and a maintenance shop were sold and removed from the camp site. (Correspondence, 1943 and 1947, 1680 Historical Files, Sullivan Lake Ranger Station).

Life for the CCC boys at Camp Sullivan Lake was not all work. Early in the program, CCC men had Saturdays, Sundays, and Wednesdays as days off. In their leisure time enrollees played

OUTLET CREEK BRIDGE, SULLIVAN LAKE
RANGER DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE SITE
HABS No. WA-117 (Page 7)

volleyball, kitten ball, horseshoes, boxing, and the most popular sport, baseball. In 1933 a regulation baseball diamond was cleared at the camp, and tournaments were held every summer. Camp Sullivan Lake boys played local teams from Metalline Falls and Ione, as well as boys from other CCC camps, including from the CCC Indian Division on the Spokane and Colville reservations. The Sullivan Lake team practiced at the diamond every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday evening at 5:30 p.m. All enrollees were encouraged to participate. (MFN 25 May, 22 June, and 17 August 1933).

Camp Sullivan Lake also hosted community dances at the Rod and Gun Club and in the Metalline Falls school house. In addition, a large recreation room was utilized for indoor activities such as chess, ping-pong, checkers, pinochle, and cribbage. Seventeen educational classes were offered at the camp, with an average student enrollment of sixty students at any one time. Typing and auto mechanics were the most popular courses among enrollees. The CCC sponsored a forestry education truck, known as the "Show Boat," that carried educational films and lantern slide talks to the camps. The "Show Boat" provided Camp Sullivan Lake two films per week. Company 2920 also published a newspaper, *The Post*, which received a "five star" rating, the highest possible, from the CCC's national publication, *Happy Days*. *The Post* charged one dollar for a six-month subscription. (MFN 5 October 1933; Gleason Papers, Folder 24, Container 4; *The Post*, October 1938).

Camp Sullivan Lake does not appear to have experienced any of the difficulties present in some camps occupied by inner-city men from distant parts of the country. Discipline problems, friction between Army and Forest Service personnel, or antagonisms among residents of local communities toward their CCC guests do not seem to be present in the Camp Sullivan Lake history. Dispiriting events occurred, to be sure. In May 1934, an outbreak of scarlet fever caused fifty boys to be quarantined, for instance. Drowning was the most frequent cause of death at Sullivan Lake. On 4 May 1934, nineteen-year-old Orvin Tuttle died when he ran off a dock at night while racing a friend to their boat. Despite such losses, and being isolated from their families for long periods of time, the young volunteers maintained their good spirits. The camp's pet deer "Minnie" was a source of entertainment, as was fishing the lake for the reputed five-pound cutthroat trout during the Memorial Day and Fourth of July festivals. CCC boys organized swimming and track competitions, as well as boxing and baseball tournaments. (MFN 3, 10 and 17 May and 28 June 1934; Gleason Papers, Folder 24, Container 4).

Life at Camp Sullivan Lake was, for the most part, healthy, happy, and beneficial to the young enrollees. CCC enlistee Sam Ferraro recalled: "It was the best two years of my life." (Ferraro interview 1994). Another CCC alumnus agreed when he wrote in his memoirs that his time in the CCC "was the best years of my early life." (Watt, unpubd. ms., n.d.) Friedolin Kessler, also a veteran of the organization, offered his assessment: "I was given a job, a new outlook on life, and an experience that I will never forget for the rest of my life. We need to bring the Civilian Conservation Corps back. It could help save our economy. It could help save our youth." (Quintero n.d.). The young men at Camp Sullivan Lake established life-long friendships

that time has not diminished. Today Spokane's Chapter 41 of the national CCC Alumni Association includes members from both companies 938 and 2920. Each spring Chapter members gather to plant trees and share reminiscences. They recall camp life and CCC traditions, and speak of the importance of discipline and hard work. Although much has changed at the Camp Sullivan Lake site, it is alive and intact in their memories. Through them the spirit of the CCC remains a living part of our country's history.

Construction of the Outlet Creek Bridge

New roads to the Outlet Creek Bridge and around the recently built administration buildings were under construction in August 1934 when KNF Supervisor J.E. Ryan reviewed plans for a new bridge at the north end of Sullivan Lake. He decided that the new structure would cross the creek over the wooden dam that supported the old bridge scheduled for replacement. (MFN 16 August 1934). But by October final plans called for the bridge to cross the creek a few feet north and downstream of the old bridge, which was to be removed, along with the "log dam" on which it stood. Approaches to the old bridge were to be abandoned and replaced by straighter roadways connecting with existing roads along the west side of the lake to Ione and on the east and north banks of the creek to Metalline Falls. Design plans for the bridge were prepared in October 1934 in the Forest Service Region 1 offices by an engineer known only by his initials as they appear on the drawings: "A.L.K." (Drawings Nos. 63-1 and 63-2, formerly nos. 77-A and 77-B).

In February 1934 the local press announced that the new bridge would be constructed "later when the CCC's return" to the Sullivan Lake Camp. Five "carloads" of materials were assembled at the lake for the Outlet Creek structure and another bridge planned farther downstream. The report stated further: "Work will be done by a Forest Service crew and common labor furnished by the county. County Commissioner Lunden is putting nine men from this district at work at the start." (MFN 28 February 1935). A later report stated that the project had been accomplished by "the government supplying the materials and skilled labor and the county the common labor." (MFN 30 May 1935).

Presumably the "skilled labor" was that of the CCC and their Forest Service supervisors, working in tandem with county laborers as they had the year before on the road connecting Camp Sullivan Lake and Metalline Falls. According to the local press, that road was "surfaced by a county crew, which has been following the forest and CCC crews with the bulldozer." (MFN 27 September 1934). During his six-week stay Camp Sullivan Lake, CCC enrollee Robert L. Powell operated a bulldozer on numerous road and bridge projects. In the spring of 1935, he and his "55 Cletrack" dozer excavated the approaches to the soon-to-be-constructed Outlet Creek Bridge. (Interview with Craig Holstine, 1993). Powell may have used his machine to remove the old bridge and dam and the points of land to which they were anchored. The present topography indicates alteration of the shoreline was done some time in the past.

OUTLET CREEK BRIDGE, SULLIVAN LAKE
RANGER DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE SITE
HABS No. WA-117 (Page 9)

USFS records indicate that 188 "man days" had been allocated for removing the old bridge and dam and building the new structure across Outlet Creek. (Inspection Report, 29 May 1935, Folder 2, Box 22, RG 95, FARC). Another Forest Service document reports that 82 man days were expended on construction of the bridge on 27, 28, and 29 May 1935. (Distribution of Labor, Camp Sullivan Lake, 26 April-29 May 1935, Folder 5, Box 21, RG 95, FARC). Construction was apparently completed at that time, as the *Metalline Falls News* reported on 30 May:

Work on the new bridge at the north end of Sullivan lake on the road from there to Ione was completed this week and is now open to traffic.

The bridge is timber and pile construction, and while it is narrow and far from a thing of beauty as compared with the concrete dam and other surroundings, is a big improvement over the structure it replaces.

In mid July of that year, H.A. Calkins, Assistant Regional Engineer, inspected the Outlet Creek and reported the following:

The new Bridge presents a very pleasing appearance. Frame Bent type and well constructed, with well graded approaches. At each end a flat crib face was used behind the end bent to support the approach fills, due to steep ground - danger in holding fill without wing logs. (Inspection Report, 14 July 1935, Folder 2, Box 22, RG 95, FARC).

It is not known if the "wing logs" were ever installed to alleviate the "danger" detected by Mr. Calkins. Although minor improvements have been made to the structure over the years, the bridge has never been washed out nor suffered serious damage. For the past fifty-nine years the Outlet Creek Bridge has served Forest Service, recreational, and industrial (mostly logging truck) traffic. It stands as a sturdy, although somewhat decrepit, reminder of the solid accomplishments of the CCC on the Sullivan Lake Ranger District.

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**OUTLET CREEK BRIDGE, SULLIVAN LAKE
RANGER DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE SITE
HABS No. WA-117**

(Page 11)

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**OUTLET CREEK BRIDGE, SULLIVAN LAKE
RANGER DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE SITE
HABS No. WA-117**

(Page 12)

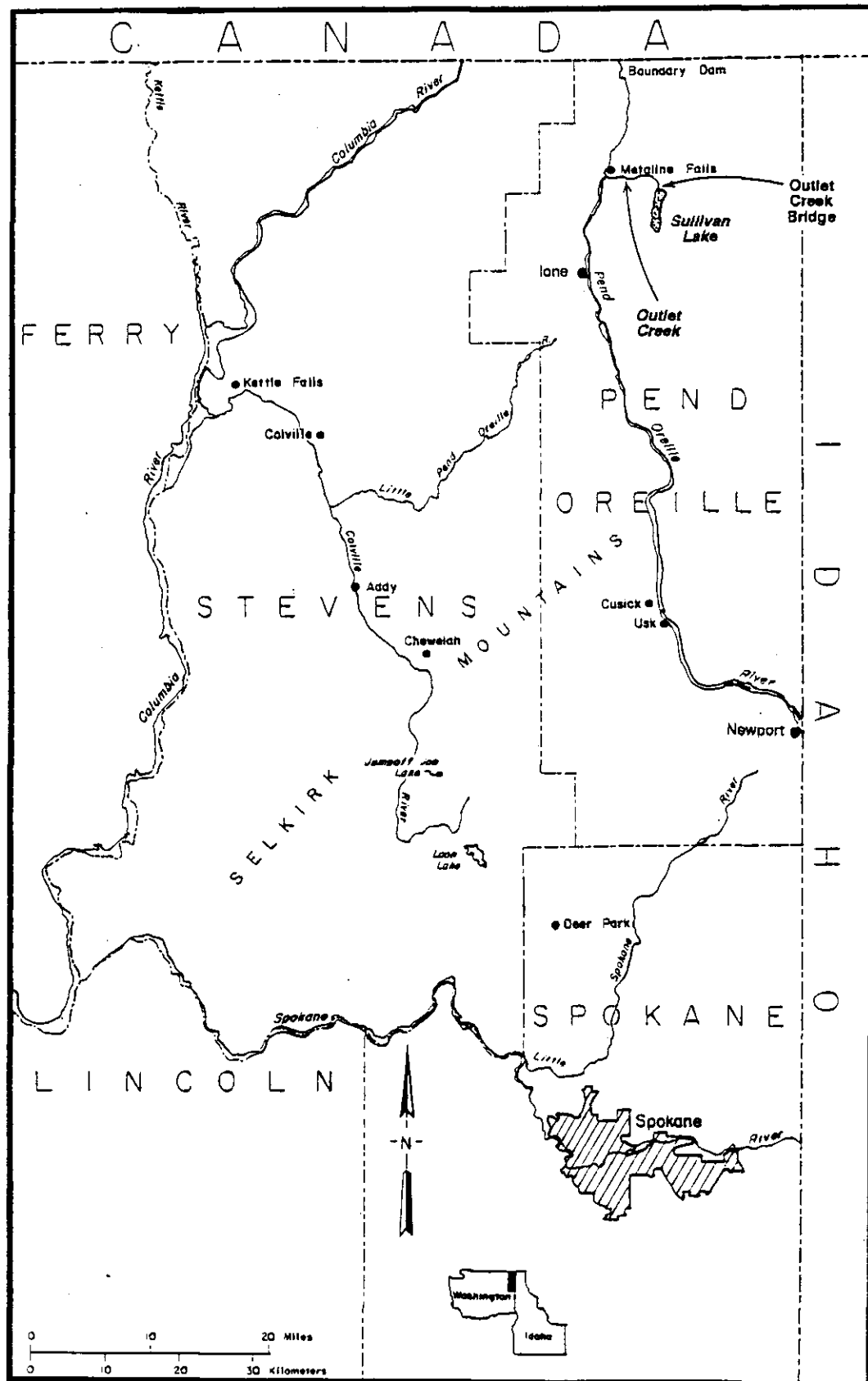


Figure 1. Northeast Washington and the Outlet Creek Bridge.

OUTLET CREEK BRIDGE, SULLIVAN LAKE
RANGER DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE SITE
HABS No. WA-117 (Page 13)

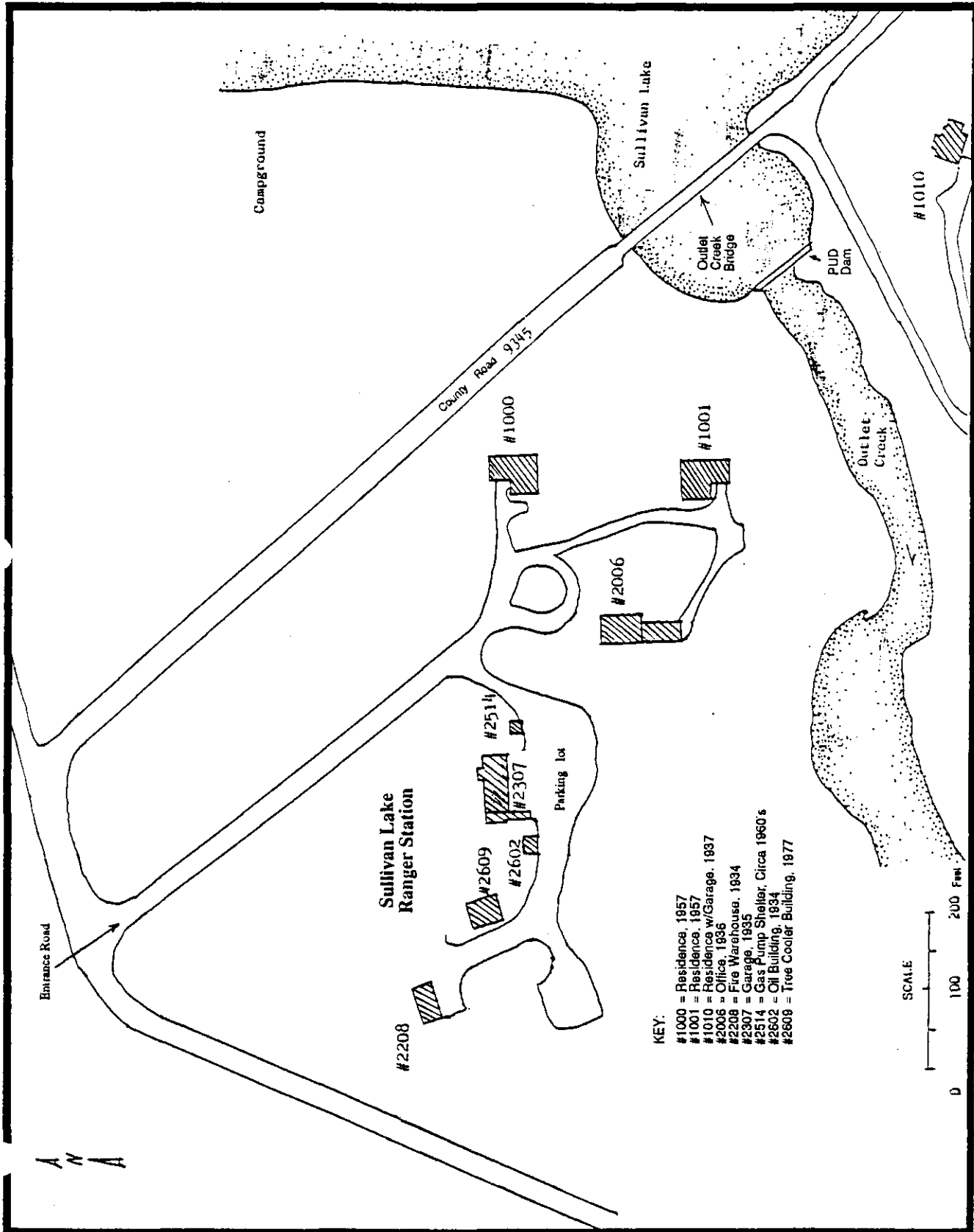


Figure 2. Sullivan Lake Ranger Station and Outlet Creek Bridge.